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The Annual Report of the Museum for 1920

THE forthcoming Annual Report of the Museum is the forty-fifth. The Trustees were incorporated in 1870 and immediately began to collect and exhibit works of art as the charter prescribed; but the project for a building was delayed by the great fire of 1872, and the issue of a regular annual review of their work awaited the opening of the Copley Square Museum.

During the year just past the visitors to the Museum numbered 288,312 as against 280,189 for 1919. In that year, and before, several thousand children from schools and settlements had been brought to the Museum through the generosity of the late Theodore N. Vail. In this year, for the first time, there were several thousand attendants at the concerts provided by other friends, and the gain from this and other sources more than balanced the loss.

The number of persons subscribing to the current expenses of the Museum in 1920 exceeded by nearly fifty per cent. the number in 1919. It is a most gratifying fact that an active sense of the value of the Museum and of its needs is to-day much more widespread in the community than ever before. Yet there is need for still greater liberality if the Museum is to continue offering its opportunities for delight and improvement as freely as at present. The citizens of Boston cannot be too often reminded that the Museum is their own sole work, unaided throughout its history by public funds, and cut off in coming years from any city or State aid by the new Constitution of Massachusetts. In the future as in the past the Museum is theirs, to make of it what they will. The income from all available sources fell short during 1920 by \$39,203.34 of meeting its current expenses, and the amount must be supplied from the capital of its unrestricted endowment. The words of the President of the Museum in his report of 1919 have been verified in 1920 to the letter: "Merely to meet its current expenses the Museum needs additional income of nearly \$40,000 annually." It may be hoped that contributions from those able to give in large amounts may still more liberally supplement hereafter the annual subscriptions received year after year from the wider and growing circle of the friends of the Museum.

The stream of additions to the artistic wealth of the Boston public as represented in the collections in the Museum has continued throughout 1920 without lessening either in value or amount. Among the acquisitions especially mentioned in the Report there are important paintings from several givers, a collection of textiles, a collection of Chinese and Japanese objects formed by the late Okakura-Kakuzo, Curator of the Department until his death in 1913, and a remarkable Buddhist statue of the twelfth century from China. The work of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian

Expedition continues actively. Conditions of transportation have just begun to permit the shipment of the share of the finds attributed to the Museum by the Egyptian government. Among them a massive wooden sarcophagus of the Middle Empire is an object of singular character and value. Acquisitions of engravings of specially fine quality from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries were made by the Print Department during the year. A remarkable opportunity is offered the student of the art of engraving in the photographic reproductions of fifteenth and sixteenth century prints made last summer for the Museum in England. Among objects of Colonial art the Museum has obtained various interior fittings from two houses of the eighteenth century.

The activities of a museum in the exposition of its collections by word of mouth are nowadays known as its educational work. In their chief branches—gallery conferences, meetings of small groups in department rooms, visits by classes from schools and settlements, guidance of individuals in the galleries—these activities have been vigorously pursued here as in previous years. "Educational work" in this sense is the creation of the past decade and a half, and is already an established feature in all American museums.

An educational work of at least equal value is performed by a museum through its publications. The present Report records a period of preparation for the publication of several volumes planned for 1921. The periodical publications have been regularly issued, the *Leaflet Guide* having a sale of 15,000 copies in 1920.

The Board of Trustees has lost by death during 1920 Theodore N. Vail, President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, and Dr. Richard Cockburn Maclaurin, President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Elihu Thomson, Acting President of the Institute, was appointed in place of Dr. Maclaurin. By virtue of his election as President of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library, Dr. Alexander Mann has become an *ex officio* Trustee of the Museum.

The Museum, 1870—1920

ON the occasion of the Semi-Centennial the Museum published in pamphlet form an illustrated historical and descriptive account of the institution from the date of its incorporation. The text treats of the Funds of the Museum, its Collections, Building, Installation, Exposition, Staff, Corporation and Needs. The illustrations represent the building, galleries and selected works of art. During the week of the Semi-Centennial reception, on December 6, the pamphlet was distributed to the Annual Subscribers of the Museum and to others and was given to all applicants. Copies may now be obtained at the entrance (price ten cents) or will be mailed on application to the Secretary of the Museum.